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THE OREGONIAN
Portland, OR

FEB 19 1995

Your comments are needed at a Hanford Facility Transition Public Meeting

Tuesday • February 21 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Location • The Ballroom • 3223 Bret Clodfelter (Exit 87) • The Dalles, OR

Public comment period: February 13 to March 30, 1995

The Tri-Party Agencies* have negotiated a tentative agreement of four major nuclear facilities; Plutonium Uranium Extraction plant, Uranium Trioxide plant, Fast Flux Test Facility and Plutonium Finishing Plant. Upon completion of the cleanup schedules, the Hanford annual costs for these facilities will be reduced approximately \$150 million.

The tentative agreement sets schedules for three facilities (Plutonium Uranium Extraction plant, Uranium Trioxide plant, and Fast Flux Test Facility) to shift from an operational standby condition to a surveillance and maintenance condition over the next six years. This will reduce the hazards to employees, the public and the environment.

The tentative agreement also schedules interim clean out activities at the Plutonium Finishing Plant. However, major cost savings and associated schedules will not be realized until after completion of the clean out based on the Environmental Impact Statement.

Send written comments to:

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Tri-Party Agreement

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* U.S. Department of Ecology • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • U.S. Department of Energy

FEB 20 1995

Reverse waste-storage policy

*Require hearings, environmental assessments
before allowing utilities to expand storage at nuclear plants*

The Bush administration decreed in 1990 that owners of nuclear plants could expand their storage of spent nuclear fuel at reactor sites without holding public hearings or writing environmental assessments.

This is dreadful public policy. But at the time the rule was proposed, few thought that any utility would actually build the storage casks without first conducting a full-blown public process and a detailed environmental examination.

Wrong. They're doing it.

The Clinton administration, with Congress' blessing, should modify this rule and require utilities to hold public hearings and write environmental assessments before they build storage casks at reactor sites.

Oregon is one of very few states that require this kind of process, independent of federal rules. Had Portland General Electric Co. wanted to expand waste storage at Trojan, the state Energy Facility Siting Council would have ordered an environmental impact statement and formal hearings.

Utilities in many other states, though, are off this hook. The Clinton administration needs to act now be-

cause utilities in Arkansas, California, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania plan to expand storage this year. Within the next three years, 26 plants will run out of room unless additional storage is found.

A utility in Michigan seized the Bush rule in 1992 and got permission from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build nine concrete and steel casks at the Palisades nuclear plant.

The state of Michigan and several environmental groups sued to block construction. But last month, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati rejected the suit. That cleared the way for utilities to store radioactive wastes at their plant sites indefinitely, without a peep from the public.

When Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982, it foresaw the impending storage pool problem and wisely encouraged utilities to build expanded waste-storage sites of their own, as a temporary measure.

The concept of expanding temporary storage at the plants is sound and supportable. The federal government, however, shouldn't try to do it by turning a rational policy into another reason for public distrust.